



# City of Idaho Falls



## WINTER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER! PREVENT FROZEN PIPES BY PREPARING TODAY!



Eastern Idaho winters can be absolutely frigid. Don't make the discomfort worse by allowing your water lines to freeze. When the frigid air arrives, water will freeze, causing it to expand. This expansion can cause pipes to burst and potential flooding. Don't give cold weather the chance to freeze your water lines.

### PREPARE FOR WINTER BEFORE IT COMES

If you live in an older home or a home that has had past problems with water lines freezing, follow these tips to help winterize your waterlines before cold weather hits:

- Every member of the household should know the location of the water shut-off valve. It is typically located where the water service enters the home through the foundation. If a water pipe freezes within your home, know where this valve is and how to shut it off to prevent flooding. If you are unable to find one or have one that does not function, have a plumber install one for you. It could save you grief and potential losses.
- Insulate pipes that are exposed, are in unheated areas (basements, garages, and crawl spaces), or that run against exterior walls. Pipe insulation or heat tape may be found at hardware stores
- Drain sprinkler lines and swimming pool supply lines.
- Remove, drain and store hoses used outdoors.
- Close valves and drain lines supplying outdoor hose bibbs. Insulate outdoor hose bibbs.



### BE READY FOR COLD WEATHER

As cold weather hits, use these tips for additional protection:

- Watch local weather forecasts. When forecasts call for an extended hard freeze or freezing temperatures that last for a few days or longer, allow a trickle of water to flow from one or more faucets in your home (unless vacant) until outside temperatures reach and remain above 30° F. The most common times for freezing waterlines is typically mid winter until early spring since it can take a while for frost to both penetrate and later recede from the ground.
- Keep garage doors and all exterior windows closed tight.
- Open cabinet doors to allow warm air to circulate around water supply lines (relocate cleaners and harmful products away from children).
- Bend toilet float up slightly to allow water to overflow the water tank
- Install a 1/8" tap onto a cold water line (like a fridge ice maker) and pipe water to an open drain.
- If leaving for vacation during cold weather, set your heater's thermostat no lower than 55° F.

For vacant buildings:

- Turn off your main shut-off valve and water heater.
- Drain irrigation systems, water heater, and all interior water lines (make sure faucets are open).
- Flush toilet to completely drain tanks, but leave water in bowls.

## WHAT IF MY WATER LINE FREEZES?

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The Water Department will pay costs associated with the initial thawing of a line frozen between the property line and the main water line in the street, **when the thawing is under the supervision of the Water Department.** If a water line is frozen more than once, or is frozen on the customer's side of the property line, the thawing becomes the financial obligation of the customer. Here are some tips if your water line freezes.

- If your house or basement is flooding, turn off the main shut-off valve to the house. If the valve doesn't stop the flooding or the flooding is coming from outside, call the Water Department immediately at **612-8471** during weekdays 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. or at **612-8439** after hours.
- If there is no flooding but you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, check your main shut-off valve. If the shut-off is completely opened, suspect a frozen pipe. Keep the faucet open, as running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Locate the suspected frozen area of the water pipe. Apply heat to the frozen pipe using a blow dryer, electric heat pad, portable space heater, or by applying rags soaked in warm water.
- **DO NOT** apply heat with electrical devices if they can come in contact with water.
- **DO NOT** use a blowtorch or kerosene heater to thaw a pipe.
- **DO NOT** overheat a single spot as the pipe can burst due to cracking of the ice.
- Thaw the pipe slowly in case the frozen line has created a leak. If a leak is present, be prepared to shut the water off and call a licensed plumber to have the leak repaired.
- Once unfrozen and leaks have been repaired, leave a trickle running through the faucet to prevent future freezing until conditions have improved.

## FURTHER PROTECTION

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For additional protection from future freezing, consider these ideas:

- Relocate exposed pipes to provide better protection or room for insulation.
- Relocate pipes from unheated areas to heated areas.
- Add insulation to attics and crawl spaces to protect water lines.
- Insulate backflow prevention devices (if installed) as they may freeze as well.

## BE PROACTIVE

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Remember that only the customer can prevent frozen water lines. While many of these ideas may seem an inconvenience, they are surely more convenient than having a waterline freeze. If some of the items appear costly, they will surely be less expensive than repairing a flooded home. So, before winter hits, take the time and make the effort to protect yourself from frozen water lines.

The contents and suggestions included in this flyer are intended to provide helpful information to you the homeowner, but **are not a guarantee** that a service will not freeze or that damage will not occur. If you have additional questions or comments, feel free to contact the Water Department at 612-8471 or email us at [drichards@ci.idaho-falls.id.us](mailto:drichards@ci.idaho-falls.id.us). Thanks for your cooperation.

<b>PREVENTING FROZEN WATER LINES BEGINS WITH YOU!</b>
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